



PUBLIC NOTICE

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WIRELINE COMPETITION BUREAU ANNOUNCES UPDATED LIFELINE MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARDS AND INDEXED BUDGET AMOUNT

WC Docket No. 11-42

By this Public Notice, the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) announces the updated minimum service standards for speed and data capacity for Lifeline-supported services as required by the *2016 Lifeline Order*.¹ The *2016 Lifeline Order* established minimum service standards for certain Lifeline-supported services and either established annual increases in those standards in the Commission's rules or directed the Bureau to update the minimum service standards pursuant to calculations set out in the *Order* and the Commission's rules.² Accordingly, we announce the newly calculated minimum service standards for fixed and mobile broadband. These standards will take effect on December 1, 2020. Finally, we announce that the budget for federal universal service support for the Lifeline program for calendar year 2021 will be \$2,428,227,364.³

Fixed broadband minimum service standards. Pursuant to the *2016 Lifeline Order*, beginning December 1, 2020, the Lifeline minimum service standard for fixed broadband speed will be 25 Mbps downstream and 3 Mbps upstream, as calculated from FCC Form 477 data.⁴ We note that the Commission provides an exception to the fixed broadband minimum service speed standard when the Lifeline provider does not offer any generally available residential fixed broadband packages that meet the minimum service standard at a subscriber's residence.⁵ In such situations, the Lifeline provider may receive Lifeline support for the highest performing generally available residential fixed broadband service offering of at least 4 Mbps downstream and 1 Mbps upstream.⁶ Beginning December 1, 2020, the

¹ *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization et al.*, WC Docket No. 11-42 et al., Third Report and Order, Further Report and Order, and Order on Reconsideration, 31 FCC Rcd 3962, 3989-3997, paras. 73-98 (2016) (*2016 Lifeline Order* or *2016 Order*); 47 CFR § 54.408.

² *2016 Lifeline Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 3988-4000, paras. 69-106; 47 CFR § 54.408(b)-(c).

³ See *2016 Lifeline Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 4110, para. 403.

⁴ See 47 CFR § 54.408(c)(1)(i); *2016 Lifeline Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 3993-94, paras. 88-90; FCC, *Form 477 Resources* (May 6, 2014), <https://www.fcc.gov/general/form-477-resources-filers> (The fixed broadband speed standard was derived from the FCC Form 477 fixed broadband subscription data as of December 2017. The data was ordered from smallest to largest by download speed, followed by upload speed, to determine percentiles).

⁵ See 47 CFR § 54.408(d); *2016 Lifeline Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 4000-4001, paras. 107-113.

⁶ 47 CFR § 54.408(d).

Lifeline minimum service standard for fixed broadband data usage will be 1024 GB per month, as calculated from Urban Rate Survey data.⁷

Mobile broadband minimum service standards. The 2016 Lifeline Order established an automatic update to the Lifeline minimum service standard for mobile broadband service speed and data capacity through November 30, 2019, and an annual update calculated by the Bureau thereafter.⁸ Accordingly, absent Commission action, beginning December 1, 2020, the Lifeline minimum service standard for mobile broadband data capacity will increase to 11.75 GB per month pursuant to the calculations set out in the 2016 Order.⁹ The Lifeline minimum service standard for mobile broadband speed remains 3G mobile technology.¹⁰

Mobile voice telephony minimum service standard. The 2016 Lifeline Order established an automatic update to the Lifeline minimum service standard for mobile voice service through November 30, 2018.¹¹ Accordingly, pursuant to the 2016 Order, on December 1, 2020, the Lifeline minimum service standard for mobile voice service will remain unchanged, at 1,000 minutes per month.¹²

Annual budget. The 2016 Lifeline Order adopted an initial budget of \$2.25 billion for the calendar year beginning January 1, 2017.¹³ The 2016 Order also stated that the budget amount will be indexed to inflation in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for all items from the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.¹⁴ To perform this calculation, the Bureau used the annual percent change factor for the preceding year (i.e., 2019) to the year in which the calculation is being performed.¹⁵ Based on this calculation, the indexed budget for federal universal service support for the Lifeline program for the calendar year beginning January 1, 2020 was \$2,385,292,106,¹⁶ and the indexed budget for the calendar year beginning January 1, 2021 will be \$2,428,227,364.

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⁷ See 47 CFR § 54.408(c)(1)(ii); 2016 Lifeline Order, 31 FCC Rcd at 3994, para. 90; FCC, *Urban Rate Survey Data & Resources*, <https://www.fcc.gov/economics-analytics/industry-analysis-division/urban-rate-survey-data-resources> (last visited July 20, 2020).

⁸ See 47 CFR § 54.408(b)(2); 2016 Lifeline Order, 31 FCC Rcd at 3994-97, paras. 91-98.

⁹ 47 CFR § 54.408(c)(2)(ii)(A)-(D); 2016 Lifeline Order, 31 FCC Rcd at 3995-96, para. 94.

¹⁰ 47 CFR § 54.408(b)(2)(i).

¹¹ See 47 CFR § 54.408(b)(3); 2016 Lifeline Order, 31 FCC Rcd at 3998-99, paras. 100-102.

¹² See 47 CFR § 54.408(b)(3)(iii) (“On and after December 1, 2018, the minimum standard will be 1000 minutes.”); 2016 Lifeline Order, 31 FCC Rcd at 3999, para. 102.

¹³ 47 CFR § 54.423(a)(1); 2016 Lifeline Order, 31 FCC Rcd at 4110, paras. 400-402.

¹⁴ 47 CFR § 54.423(a)(3); 2016 Lifeline Order, 31 FCC Rcd at 4110, para. 403.

¹⁵ See United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Price-Index All Urban Consumer U.S. City Average, Not Seasonally Adjusted, Series CUUR0000SA0* (last visited July 15, 2020), https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CUUR0000SA0?output_view=pct_12mths (annual average 12-month percent change for 2019 was 1.8 percent).

¹⁶ *Wireline Competition Bureau Announces Updated Lifeline Minimum Service Standards and Indexed Budget Amount*, Public Notice, 34 FCC Rcd 6363, 6364 (WCB 2019).